

LIVINGSTON JOB SERVICE EMPLOYER COMMITTEE 2005/2006 Year End Report

Here we are in July, and it seems we just got finished with Christmas! Time flies when you are busy and there are lots of things going on!

We continue to see many more jobs than there are people to fill them. Although wages have generally increased over the year, there are still a few positions with a starting wage less than \$7.00/hr. Generally, they are for positions that also earn tips, but these businesses are feeling the pinch of not having enough employees and not being able to recruit any. Nobody sees an end in sight to this situation in our near future.

We have presented some very interesting and excellent workshops over the past year. Jim Nys of Personnel-Plus in Helena presented "Fair Employment Laws" to Park County employees and the general public. We also brought Marla Hagen from Great Falls Job Service to present training in the Behavioral Interviewing style to both of the above entities. Kathy Helland from Montana Human Rights Bureau presented "Preventing Sexual Harassment". Over the year, I presented 2 workshops to County employees; "Beyond Sexual Harassment" and "Documenting Progressive Discipline". I also presented training to the Yellowstone Country Board of Directors on "Basics of Employment Law". And, as always, the ABC Clinic was held on April 19th. Expenses for presenting these workshops continue to rise faster than we are able to increase our charge for them.

It worked out this year that there were actually two Business Advocate training sessions—one last fall in Whitefish (the state's annual "Human Resource Conference") and the other this past June in Great Falls. The JSEC sponsored my expenses to Whitefish which I truly appreciated as I would not have been able to attend otherwise. Both trainings were excellent, and as always, I learned a lot. The JSEC also renewed my membership in SHRM/GVHRA (Society for Human Resource Management/Gallatin Valley Human Resource Association). From September through June, GVHRA puts on an excellent luncheon training program which is open to non-members as well. There are several folks from the Livingston area who attend these meeting/trainings, and I would encourage our members to participate whenever possible.

One of the best things we've been involved with this past year has been the Greater Yellowstone Trade and Technology Committee—GYTTC. Recognizing the great need we have locally for trades and tech training, this group of folks are making a concerted effort to help establish a program in our area to do just that.

Currently, we are meeting once a month—the 2nd Wednesday afternoon at 3:30, but I believe that meeting time will be changing soon as we are beginning to work closely with the high school on these issues. Everyone interested is invited to attend and participate. Give us a call for meeting dates and times.

The Committee is now the proud owner of our very own Federal Tax ID! No more social security numbers for us! We continue to provide pass-through support for the Front Line Certification program started by the Yellowstone Area System this past spring. The classes are held the 4th Wednesday of the month for a year.

A special thank you to my cohorts at the Bozeman Job Service (Nancy and Dexter) and to everyone on our local office staff who so aptly filled in for me while I was on medical leave this spring.

We have a new person on our Front Desk! Jean Modesette started employment with the Livingston Job Service on July 3, 2006, after moving permanently to Paradise Valley from Belgrade. She was previously employed as a staff assistant for a non-profit organization, Property and Environment Research Center, located in Bozeman. Jean and her husband, Mark, have 2 horses, 2 cats, and 4 llamas and she hopes to add more animals to the list in the future! Jean has a great smile and friendly manner about her, and we know everyone will like her immensely!

From Bob Kincaid: During this year we have enrolled 3 persons into the Dislocated Workers Program. 1 person received OJT and placement as a Vet Tech in Big Timber. One other (felony offender) received joint enrollment with Voc Rehab that paid for laser eye surgery allowing him to obtain his CDL. Our program paid for auto repairs for job interviews and the individual was placed (through job developments) with Sage Trucking. The third enrollee is joint enrolled with Career Transition and is receiving extensive training in Quickbooks and other bookkeeping programs. Also rapid responses were provided on 2 occasions to persons laid off from LRC Talgo. Rapid response services were also provided to 18 persons affected by the sale of County Market. Of the 18 persons, 14 were hired by Town & Country, 1 person was hired at Ace Hardware and 3 were hired by Albertsons of Livingston and Bozeman. Additional rapid response activities will be provided as required for close/sale of LRC Talgo.

From Gail Habener: The WoRC program has seen a decrease in participants this year. The average length of enrollment in the WoRC program for a participant on TANF cash has dropped from 3-4/month to 1-2/month. This is due in large part to the labor market in Park County. The many job openings we have has given the job

seeker an upper hand in finding employment that coincides with child care needs. The participants are able to gain their self-sufficiency through employment and community services, thereby reserving TANF months.

From Elizabeth Anderson: I echo what Gail had to say about the WoRC program. In addition, there were big changes for the WIA program. Because of changes made by Gov. Schweitzer, the state of Montana now administers the WIA program rather than the Montana Job Training Partnership (MJTP). Other states around us have been operating on a "single" system where the state administers and monitors the program monies. By switching to the state administered system, we save additional costs by not having to pay a private party, thereby having more funds to spend on participant services. This year I had 7 participants. One participant is completely deaf in one ear and has about 75% hearing in the other ear. He attended the CNA classes sponsored by Evergreen, successfully completed them and is now working there. He needed assistance in getting a hearing aide to help him be more successful and productive in his job. Another client needed assistance with relocating to Texas for work. I was able to assist with gas expense and several nights lodging to get him there. Another client needed assistance with clothing and eyeglasses. These were all people who were receiving cash assistance; so far none of them have had to receive further cash assistance. I look forward to being able to help more people this year with an increased budget.

From Skip Shiver: As Diversion Specialist, I work with Public Assistance applicants and recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program grants, by providing gainful employment options as an alternative to receiving program assistance. During the past year, we have been successful at diverting more than 55 Public Assistance recipients in Park County into full or part-time jobs paying an average wage of \$7.65 per hour. I have also successfully negotiated with several local employers at increasing their starting wage to align with or exceed a 130% threshold of the 2006 Federal Poverty Level guidelines.

From Sue Hanken: Currently 133 jobs are listed on the website and board as of Friday, July 07, 2006. The Resource Room receives a steady flow of visitors throughout the year though the number of people for services from our office has decreased slightly since our online services have expanded. More and more people are referring themselves to job openings on our website. Employers are encouraged to post through our office as advertising job openings on our website can prove advantageous. Most recently, Xanterra/Yellowstone Park Lodges has

requested eight of their job openings be posted on our website and offices statewide. PFL utilizes our website even though they have their own Human Resource Department. People register with Montana Job Services nationwide. Locally folks visit our office to apply for jobs, use the Internet, fax or email, research other resources, look for rentals, start up a new business, obtain forms and information on licensing, training opportunities, and other education opportunities, and apprentice testing, skills and proficiency testing required by employers. We subscribe to a testing website service call Prove It where there are currently hundreds of tests available in 16 categories. Users can also request a test not currently available on the website. Many visitors to the Job Service office are also new to Livingston and make Job Service their first stop in establishing themselves in the Community. Or, vacationers to Livingston stop by our office as they want to return to Livingston to live and are starting the process through Job Service. We continue to get a large number of questions on unemployment insurance even though we have not been a part of the UI process for nearly 8 years now.

From Joyce Heiser: Our year has been a dynamic with new activities and programs. Our office developed specific goals for the year that included more emphasis on training and 'marketing'—establishing a greater presence in the business community. Here are some of the highlights.

In partnership with the Yellowstone Area System Community Management Team, we launched the Front Line Certification program in April. The year-long program focuses on the staff who make-or-break the public face of the business and is designed to enhance customer service, awareness of community resources and strengths and professional skills. We've received rave reviews from the 17+ people attending the once-a-month sessions.

Spring found us in the Civic Center for the first annual Job Fest, as part of our effort to respond to the tight labor market. Many employers who attended the daylong event reported that they found new employees and plan to attend next year.

The Department of Health and Human Services contracted with us to provide employment-based training in Park and Meagher Counties. Zanya Betley accepted the position to develop training contracts and facilitate personalized training for the Accelerated Employment Services program.

From Zanya Betley: Accelerated Employment Service Program (AES) experienced a productive first year. Officially, we had a productive 9 months since funding was approved later in the fiscal year.

As competition for qualified employee's increases, employers are recognizing the benefit in hiring trainees. While training new employees is beneficial, it can also be expensive. The AES program partnered 12 employers with Job Service to provide enhanced employment training. Enthusiastic workers, who enjoy coming to work, and ongoing support Job Service's employment specialists benefit employers.

The AES program has paid over \$55,000.00 directly to employers, helping to offset the cost of training new workers. Employers in Park and Meagher counties have received over \$21,000.00 in training dollars.

Our trainees successfully transition to on-going careers resulting in a win-win for everyone.

County	Training \$ to employers	# in subsidized	# in unsubsidized	Total	W/ benefits	Over \$10/hr	Received raise	Retention 3 mo. / 6 mo.
Park	16643.53	5	1	6	2	1	2	2 / 2
Meagher	4560.00	1	-	1	-	-	-	1 / -
Gallatin	28734.40	5	1	6	5	4	2	2 / 2
Madison	6080.00	1	-	1	-	-	-	- / -

The real success is not the numbers, but the life altering effect the program has on participants.

A participant that was unable to work in her former food service occupation, due to a domestic violence injury, is now working in a professional environment. She lives in a rural area, has 4 children, and had no prior office experience. She is now providing reception services and working as a research assistant. She is starting her 5th month of employment and is no longer receiving cash assistance. .

A participant with a pattern of 2 to 8 week employment has completed her 6th month as a medical office assistant. She has full benefits, including perks such as a gym membership and is earning over \$9/hr. She and her family are no longer receiving cash assistance. With the help of this program she was able to gain valuable skills through job training, and with the additional ongoing case management provided by the program, she was also able to break a destructive pattern.